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Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development
Second session
Geneva, 8–9 December 2014

Report of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development on its second session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 8 to 9 December 2014

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Introduction

1. The second session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland from 8 to 9 December 2014. The topic for this session was decided at the consultations of the President of the Trade and Development Board on 15 January 2013.

2. The discussion was organized into four sessions, each with a panel of speakers presenting different aspects of the topic for consideration and debate by participating experts. A number of high-level trade policymakers and trade negotiators participated in the meeting, including ambassadors, deputy permanent representatives, capital-based officials, researchers, academics and senior officials and representatives of international organizations and civil society groups. The panel discussions and interactive debates allowed for the exchange of innovative ideas and policy options and strengthened understanding of ways and means to enhance the enabling nature of the international trading system, in order to harness trade's potential role in inclusive and sustainable development in the context of the post-2015 development framework and sustainable development goals.

I. Chair's summary

A. Opening statements

3. The Director of the Division on Globalization and Development Strategy, in his opening statement on behalf of the Secretary-General, emphasized that the meeting came at an opportune time, as the international community prepared to define the post-2015 development framework and World Trade Organization (WTO) members resumed their negotiations in the Doha Round. Despite its potential to contribute to sustainable development, the expansion of international trade did not always automatically lead to such results, pointing to the need for policies at national, regional and international levels that would help to translate the gains from trade integration into broad-based development. Such policies could play a pivotal role in triggering structural transformation and building robust productive capacities that paved the way for diversification, technological upgrading and job creation.

4. The Director observed that over the past two decades, the changing size, structure and patterns of international trade had brought both enormous opportunities and challenges. Increases in trade had been accompanied by rising real per capita income in most developing regions, although gains had been uneven, both among and within developing countries. In this regard, he stated that the international trading system should provide an overarching enabling environment in which trade could play a catalytic role in sustainable development. The Director welcomed the recent decisions of WTO members, moving ahead with implementing the decisions adopted at the ninth Ministerial Conference of the WTO (3–6 December 2013, Bali, Indonesia), while stressing the importance of addressing challenges facing the system with regard to reinforcing its relevance, by delivering negotiated outcomes and by strengthening its architecture to better respond to changing economic realities and global challenges.

5. The Head of the Trade Negotiations and Commercial Diplomacy Branch introduced the secretariat's background note.[1] Given the changing landscape of trade and development, including the increased importance of manufacturing trade within global value chains and the critical role of services trade, she stressed that the expected broad-based contribution of trade to post-2015 sustainable development goals would require policies supporting a positive interface between trade and related public policies. Evolving national policy needs and priorities had called for an enabling environment ensuring a fair and open trading environment and reserving space for countries to implement such policies.

6. The Head of Branch emphasized that the Bali outcome was important in regenerating confidence in the multilateral trading system and paving the way for multilateral negotiations. This work was also likely to be influenced by ongoing parallel plurilateral and regional processes. In addition, by inducing deeper liberalization and high-standard, cutting-edge regulatory harmonization covering an increasing share of world trade, recent mega-regional trade agreements could have important implications for multilateralism. The Head of Branch concluded her remarks by noting that it would therefore be necessary to reinvigorate the multilateral trading system as a global public good with a renewed impetus, credibility and relevance. It would also be necessary to reinforce coherence between the multilateral trading system and regional trade agreements, in order that these arrangements could form an effective enabling environment for development. Participants commended the secretariat's background note for its high-quality, balanced and insightful analysis.

B. Towards an enabling multilateral trading system for inclusive and sustainable development

(Agenda item 3)

1. The evolving contribution of trade and the multilateral trading system to inclusive growth and sustainable development

7. In the first session, the focus was on the key enabling role trade was expected to play in the post-2015 framework for inclusive and sustainable development. Participants recognized that trade was only one factor among many that would contribute to development. In this regard, participants emphasized that a coherent and integrated framework of development policies linking trade with other complementary policies was indispensable. In order to ensure a positive impact on development, macroeconomic and social policies would need to be in place, as well as institutional arrangements aimed at increased public–private coordination and coordination within the Government, including the office of the Head of Government.

8. The need for national and international measures to make trade integration inclusive and sustainable and to build productive capacities was stressed. However, policy needs were also evolving as a result of transformative shifts in international trade. The structure and pattern of trade had changed significantly over the past decades, as evidenced by the growth of emerging economies, greater prevalence of global value chains, increased importance of services, more volatile commodity prices and growth in South-South trade. The changing structure of world trade and emerging development challenges therefore called for different policies to address trade to foster development.

9. In this context, participants acknowledged that structural transformation could have an important role in making growth and development more inclusive and sustainable. One

[1] TD/B/C.I/MEM.5/5.

speaker suggested that a modern, smart industrial policy could play a role and could be achieved within the existing policy space available under the WTO agreements. Furthermore, some speakers considered that industrial policy, if understood to mean infant industry protection, might prove to be ineffective in the context of increased trade within global value chains. Other speakers stressed the need to promote an inclusive form of trade to reduce structural heterogeneity, which could be achieved through efforts directed towards product and market diversification, capitalizing on greater intra-regional South-South trade to foster greater diversification, innovation and technology upgrading within regional value chains and broader social inclusion, for instance of small and medium-sized enterprises. The improvement of regional infrastructure and logistics, coordination of national industrial policies at regional levels, harmonization of regulations and development of equivalencies would therefore be required. One speaker stated that, while fast-track industrialization had enabled some countries to participate successfully in global value chains, many smaller economies remained at the margins of these dynamic trade flows and some countries struggled to move from low-skill labour-intensive activities towards those that added greater economic value. The speaker also pointed to the challenges in spreading the benefits of trade more evenly within and across countries.

10. At the international level, an enabling economic environment, especially the architecture of global trade governance, was considered key to sustaining increased and diverging national policy needs in support of inclusive development. Several speakers stressed that the multilateral trading system should be more inclusive, to contribute to such an enabling economic environment, taking into account the development needs of developing countries. Other speakers stated that the negotiations in the run up to Bali demonstrated that negotiations in the WTO had become more inclusive in recent years.

2. The role of the multilateral trading system as a public good

11. Participants generally agreed that the ninth Ministerial Conference of the WTO had been important in giving a renewed impetus to the Doha Round of trade negotiations of the WTO and welcomed the WTO General Council decisions adopted on 27 November 2014 that renewed forward movement in negotiations. Participants generally agreed that the Doha Round should be pursued as a matter of priority, as its conclusion was considered of strategic importance from national perspectives, as well as of systemic importance for long-term credibility of the multilateral trading system. Some participants stressed that it was important to deliver results in the Round before moving on to any new issues.

12. However, participants generally recognized that concluding the Doha Round in a short time frame remained particularly challenging because of the significant changes in the world economy since the launch of the Round in 2001. During this period, emerging countries had grown and South-South trade had increased significantly. Changing trade dynamics and policies had thus called for the adoption of new approaches to negotiations, for example regarding agricultural trade, where higher and more volatile commodity prices had raised different sets of policy challenges, as evidenced by the current food security debate. One speaker noted that some of the large emerging economies now had very different interests in agriculture compared to smaller developing and least developed countries. There had also been changes in the levels and users of agricultural domestic support, in both developed and developing countries. Speakers suggested a range of possible policy reforms, including in the following areas: domestic support and export competition; public stockholding and food security; export restrictions; market access; the safeguards mechanism; cotton; green box policies; and new and emerging trade barriers such as non-tariff measures and private standards. Some of these could be taken up in the post-Bali work programme.

13. The expected effect of trade agreements was debated. It was acknowledged that different quantitative studies using general equilibrium models had produced different results. One speaker highlighted that the WTO agreements in Bali alone could create 21 million new jobs, including 18 million in developing countries. Another speaker suggested that the overall gains from the Doha Round might be limited because tariff cuts would be on bound rates and a number of flexibilities had been incorporated in the agricultural and non-agricultural market access modalities, particularly for developing countries. These would limit the overall level of tariff cuts and thereby limit welfare gains. The effects would also be limited, or even negative, for least developed countries, if duty-free and quota-free market access was not taken into account, since these economies would be adversely affected by preference erosion. This could be overcome through increasing product coverage towards 100 per cent and provision by larger developing countries of increased duty-free and quota-free market access for least developed countries. By contrast, the speaker noted, the conclusion of the Doha Round would deliver significant benefits through pre-empting tariffs reversals and rising protectionism, suggesting the importance of expeditiously concluding the Doha Round even if ambitions for its conclusions had to be lowered, as this would allow members to move on to address other issues of greater economic significance.

14. Several speakers stressed the need to maintain the development centrality of the Doha Round, as provided in the original mandate adopted in 2001. Special and differential treatment and the specific trade and development concerns of least developed countries, small and vulnerable economies and landlocked developing countries, as well as the less than full reciprocity principle, needed to be fully embodied in future outcomes. Several speakers also emphasized the particular importance of agriculture in this regard, stating that, given the importance of agriculture in many developing countries and the fact that agricultural trade remained the most distorted of all sectors, agriculture should remain the locus for determining the level of liberalization and establishing a balanced outcome. Other speakers noted that the nature of global agriculture markets had changed significantly since the Uruguay Round, with increasing farm subsidies in many countries, including developing economies. One speaker noted that it was important to introduce the right incentives for proper and timely notification of agricultural subsidies. The importance of achieving legally binding results on least developed country-specific issues such as duty-free and quota-free market access and the operationalization of the least developed countries services waiver was highlighted by several speakers, along with the key role of services.

15. Several speakers did not see the need to fundamentally change the current approach to negotiations in the short term, emphasizing that key parameters of the WTO – a single undertaking, consensus and a bottom-up approach – remained valid and that the size and diversity of WTO membership should not be seen as an impediment to the functioning of the WTO. A pragmatic, flexible and creative approach and a focus on doables, as provided in the guidelines circulated at the eighth Ministerial Conference of the WTO (15–17 December 2011, Geneva), which called for exploring new approaches while focusing on areas where progress could be made, would prove sufficient. This approach had already brought results, as evidenced by the adoption of the Bali package, and opened the way for plurilateral negotiations on selected issues. Some speakers expressed concern, however, regarding the implications of the plurilateral negotiations for the multilateral process and future outcomes of the Round, as they excluded many developing countries, and they stressed that pragmatism should not stand in the way of the primacy of multilateralism. Some speakers stressed the importance of keeping plurilateral negotiations within the WTO and open to new members, while ensuring that such negotiations were WTO-compatible and keeping them temporary in nature in order to allow for future multilateralization.

16. Some speakers suggested that the fundamental issues affecting the Doha Round negotiations had been different expectations on the adequate level of contributions to be made by different groups of countries. In particular, there was disagreement on the level of contribution to be made by larger developing countries, with one speaker calling for a new and pragmatic balance of contributions between developed and emerging economies. This disagreement related directly to the definition of development and how development needs should be addressed in the WTO context. Some speakers stressed the need to go beyond traditional special and differential treatment in order to harness the benefits of trade liberalization for development, including by considering empirical data and studies. Development issues should not be discussed in isolation, but rather by looking at the overall impact of trade deals on development outcomes. Others saw continued validity in the traditional special and differential treatment measures, as even larger developing countries continued to face critical poverty challenges. Several speakers stressed the importance of efforts to ensure the fuller participation of the least developed countries in the multilateral trading system.

17. The importance of a pragmatic approach in catering to a growing divergence in the needs and capacities of developing countries was stressed by some speakers. Several speakers made reference in this regard to the innovative approach adopted in the Agreement Trade on Facilitation to provide special and differential treatment for developing countries in implementing commitments. This could provide a model for linking trade policy commitments by developing countries with their implementing capacity, the provision of capacity-building support and capacity acquisition. Such an approach would be useful in reflecting the diversity in the capacities of developing countries and could usefully be replicated in other areas. Several other speakers highlighted the particular importance for their economies of trade facilitation, and called upon UNCTAD to coordinate closely with the WTO and the International Trade Centre in providing support in implementing their commitments. Reference was made to the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility initiative recently launched by the WTO.

18. Several speakers recognized the long-term need to strengthen the capacity of the multilateral trading system to deliver negotiated results. One speaker suggested that the current architecture of the multilateral trading system had been built on the premises of continued Round negotiations based on reciprocity. This implied that every multilateral trade negotiation needed to capture a wide range of issues to achieve balance, resulting in large and unmanageable negotiations. It also created an expectation that perceived imbalances arising from previous negotiating rounds would be carried over into future negotiations. To better align the global trade architecture with the post-2015 framework for inclusive and sustainable development, there was a need for cooperative negotiations focusing on common ground, such as by significantly facilitating WTO accession processes. Furthermore, building greater partnership between the multilateral trading system and international institutions, particularly UNCTAD, would serve to ensure greater coherence.

19. Several speakers concurred that the WTO dispute settlement mechanism continued to function well. While the system had effectively curtailed former and existing forms of protectionism, it was noted that the dispute settlement mechanism could not address new forms of protectionism on issues not covered by existing WTO rules. They suggested that such issues should be addressed through rule-making exercises, rather than by judicial activism, and this suggested the importance of enhancing the negotiating arm of the multilateral trading system and, in the view of the speakers, of addressing the twenty-first century trade agenda.

3. New regional trade architecture, systemic coherence and development

20. Participants acknowledged that the recent evolution of the international trading system had been marked by the accelerated proliferation, expansion and deepening of regional trade agreements. This trend had recently witnessed a quantum leap with the emergence of mega-regional trade agreements. Discussion centred on the implications of recent new-generation regional trade agreements, including South-South integration, for multilateral market-opening and rule-making efforts. Recent agreements, particularly mega-regional trade agreements, had been driven by a desire for greater regulatory harmonization rather than purely tariff reductions and many agreements exceeded WTO disciplines in regulating Government procurement, competition, investment, e-commerce and labour standards. Mega-regional trade agreements could be considered a game changer if successfully concluded, affecting a substantial proportion of global trade, investment and gross domestic product.

21. While various economic and geographical factors had contributed to the greater prevalence of regional trade agreements, several speakers concurred that the main factor shaping such agreements in the twenty-first century was the need to overcome regulatory divergences across markets, which led to market segmentation and acted as major barriers to trade. Overcoming regulatory barriers was particularly relevant as trade increasingly took place through global value chains. Twenty-first century regional trade agreements had been driven by the changing structure of world trade whereby factors of production – including people and, for instance, factories, capital and technology – moved across borders rather than finished goods. This structure had called for seamless trade across borders to reduce trade costs, addressing the trade–investment–services–know-how nexus. Regional trade agreements were thus no longer primarily focused on tariffs but on regulatory convergence.

22. Some speakers suggested that regional trade agreements could have both positive and negative implications for developing countries, both those that participated in such agreements and those that were excluded. Regulatory harmonization could serve to reduce trade costs for trade within regional trade agreements. The impact on non-members was harder to predict. One speaker suggested, for example, that the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement could lower costs across the entire region if it made it easier for third countries to comply with regulations or it could raise costs if it led to upward harmonization. Larger developing countries, as well as many small economies, tended not to participate in mega-regional trade agreements. Exclusion from regional trade agreements could act as an incentive to join existing agreements or develop other such agreements. Several speakers concurred that the overall effects of regional trade agreements were very hard to predict with accuracy.

23. One speaker submitted that China would be likely to pursue unilateral liberalization gradually and pursue regional deeper integration schemes such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, as it was not party to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and its economy was currently in transition from export-led growth to a domestic demand-led growth model capitalizing on the services sector. Mega-regional trade agreements could also have the effect of fragmenting ongoing South-South regional integration processes, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, if only a subset of countries was included and smaller countries left out. The speaker suggested that it was important to minimize the costs of regulatory harmonization for developing countries, including through mutual recognition and the use of less stringent standards and of international standards. Harmonization implied designing common policies and presumed trust among trading partners with similar income levels and regulatory preferences. Most significantly, regulatory templates developed in mega-regional trade agreements that covered an important share of world trade might be used as a basis for future trade

negotiations, including on a global scale. Developing countries therefore needed to engage in a proactive discussion of the global regulatory agenda.

24. Some speakers stressed that recent regional trade agreements could have particular consequences for developing countries in limiting the scope for policy. Some regulatory issues, together with deep integration, were particularly relevant to development policy. For instance, this might be true for services, investment, investor–State dispute settlement systems, State-owned enterprises, Government procurement, intellectual property rights and capital movement. Some regional trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties had introduced a wide definition of investment and stringent disciplines with the result that certain investor–State disputes had led to a high amount of financial compensation. Disciplines on Government procurement and State-owned enterprises could limit the ability of Government to support domestic industries, small and medium-sized enterprises and associated public policy goals. Other speakers expressed caution in overstating such potentially restrictive effects of regional trade agreements, as agreements could also be facilitative. The validity of the argument for infant-industry protection was questioned in the context of twenty-first century trade and regional trade agreements.

25. A range of views were expressed on the methodological validity of alternative approaches to modelling the costs and benefits of trade agreements. One speaker presented an assessment of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, using the United Nations Global Policy Model, which accounted for unemployment and structural features of the economy according to business cycle and policy trends. The speaker noted that these results suggested an overall negative impact from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership for Europe and at the global level, in terms of higher unemployment and inequality and financial bubbles. Other speakers disagreed, citing existing studies and independent assessments, and noting that the overall effect of the Partnership would be positive both for Europe and globally. One participant drew attention to a study which showed that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership could boost the European Union gross domestic product by 0.5 per cent, or €120 billion, annually, once fully implemented.

26. Several speakers emphasized that the multilateral trading system should remain the cornerstone of the international trading system, ensuring predictability, transparency and non-discrimination and the widest possible participation. Multilateralism remained the best way to realize broad-based liberalization that integrated development, including in support of trade within global value chains. Certain issues, such as agricultural and fishery subsidies, could only be addressed within the WTO. Some speakers pointed to the need to re-evaluate the role of the multilateral trading system in a multipolar world, for the system to serve as the guardian of past liberalization while maintaining links to regional trade agreements in its aegis and a sound dispute settlement system. It was important for the multilateral trading system to be proactive and to address the regulatory agenda and forge a consensus on how regional and plurilateral processes could proceed without harming the multilateral trading system. One speaker suggested agreeing a code of conduct for plurilateral negotiations.

27. Several speakers stressed that current regional trade agreement trends might lead to a two-tier trading system with old or twentieth-century trade issues addressed in the WTO and new or twenty-first century issues addressed by regional trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties. The multilateral trading system risked losing its relevance in the long term without an adequate response, as the system had not been as effective in tackling regulatory issues. Mega-regional trade agreements could lead to further fragmentation, differentiating countries within and outside such agreements. In the long term, regional trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties might transform world trade governance. Coherence between multilateral trade negotiations and regional trade agreements would

thus depend on the capacity of the WTO to adjust. Some speakers suggested that such change should consist of incorporating variable geometry, allowing willing countries to advance more quickly, including through plurilateral approaches. Another speaker suggested that the challenge lay in the multilateralization of some of the new trade rules that were particularly relevant to global value chains, in order to maximize network externalities via common rules.

4. Future directions: Strengthening the multilateral trading system in the twenty-first century

28. Participants recognized that while multilateral trade disciplines and liberalization approaches needed to be adapted to twenty-first century trade realities, attention continued to be given to addressing older trade issues. Several speakers stressed that while the debate on the next agenda for the WTO was often skewed towards emerging subjects, some unfinished issues from previous agendas deserved attention, such as the pervasive role of subsidies, including taxing systems and the use of local-content requirements. It was important to find paths to secure agreements and in order to increase levels of commitments, Governments wishing to move forward should be allowed to do so. A differentiation model or variable geometry, as used in the Tokyo Round of negotiations in the 1970s, might be useful in this regard.

29. Other speakers stressed the continued validity of multilateralism and a single undertaking as the guardians of transparent, predictable, non-discriminatory and rules-based trade, addressing the needs of the majority of developing countries. It was important to manage fragmentation risks that might be brought by regional trade agreements, mega-regional trade agreements and plurilateral approaches.

30. Some speakers noted that the multilateral trading system needed to resolve pending issues to gain the necessary credibility to tackle new issues. The evolving the multilateral trading system would most likely build on the existing architecture. Nevertheless, some aspects needed to evolve, including the decision-making process, taking into consideration the fact that the WTO had expanded its membership, changing its capacity to move forward in negotiations. There was a need to facilitate the building and preservation of consensus to enhance the credibility of commitments. UNCTAD could play an important role in preparing the ground for such consensus through research and analysis, intergovernmental dialogues and capacity-building.

31. Several speakers addressed some of the issues that could affect the future operation of the multilateral trading system, for instance the increase in importance of trade in services in its economic significance and potential contribution to sustainable development goals. One speaker submitted that food security had become a salient challenge for the multilateral trading system, given its strong links to future sustainable development goals, particularly with regard to ensuring that agricultural trade liberalization was reconciled with food security. Many studies on food security had been limited to impacts on prices, yet it was also important to enhance agricultural productivity; the method of promotion of productivity growth would depend on the country. Such policy needs pointed to the importance of sufficient flexibility and special and differential treatment, as well as aid for trade, in pursuing domestic policy agendas to enhance the promotion of agricultural productivity growth without causing global market distortions.

32. Another speaker highlighted that currency fluctuation and misalignment could be seen as a systemic issue affecting the multilateral trading system, as it could impair or nullify existing bound-tariffs commitments and concessions. Undervalued currencies had the effect of export subsidies and increased tariff protection, while overvalued currencies – the speaker highlighted the Brazilian real as an example – could have the same effect as export taxes and import subsidies. This issue pertained to both the WTO and the

International Monetary Fund, but uncertainty in international disciplines remained as to whether and how the effect of exchange rates on trade might be addressed. The speaker called upon UNCTAD to act as a forum to discuss the issues pertaining to international financial architecture.

33. Several speakers recognized the central role to be played by the multilateral trading system in the post-2015 global partnership for sustainable development. The importance of aligning the built-in agenda of the WTO with the high-level commitments of the post-2015 development framework was emphasized. This would require significant institutional adaptation and the reform of its constitutional mandates. One speaker suggested that, in the past, fundamental institutional changes had occurred only as a result of catalytic events. Such reform was considered possible, however, given similar reforms undertaken by others, for instance by the Bretton Woods institutions and the International Labour Organization, so as to better align with the transformative shifts in surrounding environments. Certain aspects of the multilateral trading system might also require substantial reforms. For instance, WTO accession by least developed countries remained a challenge with, in many cases, newly acceding countries making deeper commitments than existing members, particularly through the requirement that new members needed to negotiate a market-access deal with every existing WTO member. The speaker stated that this had led to a two-tiered membership in the multilateral trading system and suggested improving the accessions process with the end goal of universal membership.

34. Other speakers stressed that the perspectives underlying trade negotiations and the post-2015 development framework should be similar, considering that they were held by the same countries, demonstrating the importance of coherence between trade and development policymaking nationally and internationally.

35. Several speakers suggested that such adaptation would also require a focus on special and differential treatment, as development had to be an essential component of the way forward. Special and differential treatment had to be better targeted to fit with different categories of developing countries. There was also a need to make special and differential treatment more detailed, addressing the specific needs and interests of different developing countries, because no one-size-fits-all model would apply. In this regard, the special and differential treatment adopted in the Agreement on Trade Facilitation was a good example of targeting the differing needs and capacities of developing countries and this type of treatment might be replicated in other areas. To this end, it would be important to analyse how trade could be used as a tool to enable development. These efforts would benefit from a better alignment between the Bretton Woods institutions and the trade and development-related organizations based in Geneva, particularly UNCTAD.

36. With regard to practical next steps in enhancing the role of trade in inclusive and sustainable development, several speakers pointed to areas where further work by UNCTAD could make an important contribution, including the following:

- Promote intergovernmental discussion on enhancing an enabling economic environment, increasing coherence between trade, finance and development, including between the Bretton Woods institutions and the trade and development-related organizations based in Geneva.
- Act as a consensus builder through research and analysis, intergovernmental dialogues and capacity-building on ongoing and new and emerging issues of international trade, such as the development dimension, including special and differential treatment, investment, supply chain disciplines, the broader regulatory agenda, various aspects of food security and exchange rates.
- Provide continued analytical and technical support to developing countries on multilateral and regional trade negotiations.

- Support services economy and trade, including through services policy reviews.
- Support national efforts to assess and formulate best-fit national trade policy frameworks and strategies in support of post-2015 sustainable development goals.
- Scale up support for WTO accession, particularly for least developed countries.
- Provide research and capacity-building support on specific issues affecting developing countries, including standards and non-tariff measures, regional trade agreements and quantitative impact assessments of trade agreements.
- Contribute to trade-related capacity-building support, including trade facilitation.

II. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

37. At its opening plenary, on 8 December 2014, the multi-year expert meeting elected Mr. Andrew Staines (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as its Chair and Mr. Juan Carlos Sánchez Troya (Ecuador) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

38. Also at its opening plenary, the multi-year expert meeting adopted the provisional agenda for the session (contained in document TD/B/C.I/MEM.5/4). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Towards an enabling multilateral trading system for inclusive and sustainable development
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting

C. Outcome of the session

39. At its closing plenary, on 9 December 2014, the multi-year expert meeting agreed that the Chair should summarize the discussions.

D. Adoption of the report of the meeting

(Agenda item 4)

40. At its closing plenary, the multi-year expert meeting authorized the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to finalize the report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Annex

Attendance[2]

1. Representatives from the following States members of UNCTAD attended the session:

Algeria
Angola
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belarus
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Brazil
Cameroon
Chile
China
Colombia
Cuba
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Estonia
Ethiopia
France
Germany
Greece
Haiti
India
Iraq
Jamaica
Jordan
Kenya
Lesotho
Libya
Mali
Malta
Mexico
Morocco
Oman
Pakistan
Paraguay
Philippines
Poland
Republic of Korea
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Switzerland
Trinidad and Tobago
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uruguay
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Yemen

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

Eurasian Economic Commission
European Union
South Centre

3. The following United Nations organs, bodies and programmes were represented at the session:

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

4. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
International Labour Organization
United Nations Industrial Development Organization

[2] This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/C.I/MEM.5/INF.2.

World Trade Organization

5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:

General category

Cameroon Organization for Promoting International Economic Cooperation
Consumer Unity and Trust Society International
International Council of Nurses
International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations
International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees
Third World Network

Special category

International Food Policy Research Institute